



OS



ACF



AOA

CDC

CMS

FDA



SAMHSA

A Dedication Ceremony

April 23, 2004

“Building a Healthy Future”

by

Charles W. Grim, D.D.S., M.H.S.A.

Assistant Surgeon General

Director, Indian Health Service

It is an honor to be here today in Minnesota and a privilege to be part of the dedication of the expansion of the Min No Aya Win Human Services Center.

We are here today to dedicate a 29,000-square-foot addition to the health center that stands at the same site where, in the 1970s, a Community Health Representative with contracted funds from the Indian Health Service began building a history of service to Indian people from rented space in a trailer. (note—if a trailer was on the site, then the health center was not—and a health center is not a “who” or a “whose”) In 1995, the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa entered into a Self-Governance compact with the Indian Health Service to establish its own programs of health services. Over the years, the staff of the Human Services Center has achieved honors and special recognitions, and established a reputation for innovation and a willingness to “try something new” to achieve the goal of better health for the people you serve. I am impressed with your awards for “being the best” and for “being the first” and I especially respect your programs and efforts that focus on family health, elder care, children’s health, and the promotion of health and wellness.

I am also aware of the business achievements of the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee as well as the benefits they pass along to the community – such as this outstanding addition to the Center. Investing in health programs, particularly those of health promotion and disease prevention, will help achieve the goal of raising the health status of Indian people to the highest possible level. Each investment, no matter the amount, helps us get closer to our goal.

Like many of you, I received health services from the Indian Health Service as I was growing up. I set my sights on working for the Indian Health Service and helping Indian people as a result of my early experiences in Oklahoma. My enthusiasm to serve Indian people is just as great as the first day I entered an Indian Health Service health facility as a dentist. And to be here to walk through this magnificent facility with you today is a privilege that I do not take lightly, and it is an honor that I truly appreciate. This Center is the form and substance of the vision of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa leadership for improving the health of their people. It will now provide care for their families and descendants for generations to come.

This addition brings the total health care space to 65,000 square feet and serves the Indian people of the Fond du Lac Reservation and the Duluth area. The addition doubles the space provided by the expansion of 1996. I am sure the 180 employees in the 10 departments of the Human Services Division are eager to be providing services from the new space; services such as diabetes prevention and treatment, physical therapy, acute care services, audiology, dental, aftercare, pharmacy, behavioral health, and many other associated support services to meet the health needs of your community.

This impressive accomplishment stands as an example of what can be achieved through the determination and leadership of the Tribes, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Indian Health Service, and the American Indian people. We have come to the point where we stand side-by-side in advocating for our people, and in striving to eliminate the disparity in health status between American Indian and Alaska Native people and the rest of the U.S. population. This facility opens a door to a brighter and healthier future for generations to come.

Thank you for inviting me and asking me to speak at this historical occasion. This is a wonderful achievement, and I congratulate all of you for your hard work and dedication, and for showing the way for American Indian and Alaska Native people across the nation.

Thank you.

The text is the basis of Dr. Grim’s oral remarks at the Dedication of the Fond du Lac Human Services Center in Cloquet, Minnesota, on April 23, 2004. It should be used with the understanding that some material may have been added or omitted during presentation.